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The Social Construction of the Individual in Modern Capitalist Systems

INTRODUCTION

The emphasis of the social construction approach to psychology is that the individual and their behaviour are products of their surroundings: "The person, consciousness, mind and the self are seen as social through and through" (Wetherell and Maybin 1996 p222).

More specifically, the individual is the product of the social-historical-cultural (SHC) context (Brewer 2002). Thus to understand the psychology of the individual, it is necessary to be aware of their society and culture, and the history of that society and culture.

Most psychological ideas and theories come from the West (usually meaning North America and Western Europe), and, in the main, from the USA. Traditional theories from twentieth century psychology (eg: experimental approach - Wetherell et al 1996) have assumed that the findings of studies in the West were applicable around the world. More recently, it has been accepted that there are clear cultural differences which limit the generalisability of findings from the West (Lalljee 1996). While social constructionism places even greater emphasis on the cultural influence upon behaviour.

However, even accepting the importance of culture, very little psychological work has considered the over-riding aspect of Western society and recent history - capitalism (or capitalist systems). It is so obvious that people behave as they do in capitalist systems that it is never seen as necessary to question the assumptions of such systems. Yet it is only in relative recent history that monetary exchange for goods, a key aspect of capitalist systems, has become the norm (eg: medieval times in Western Europe).

This article considers what is meant by capitalist systems, and how awareness of the values and norms of such systems are crucial in understanding human psychology for those who live under these systems. Capitalisms or capitalist systems are the terms used because there are many variations in capitalism throughout history, and around the world. For example, Brewer (2001a) sees the existence of "consumer capitalism" as the dominant form of capitalism today in the West [1].

[1] "Consumer capitalism" is based upon inevitable continuous economic growth (ie selling more products and increasing profits each year), but this takes place in saturated markets (individuals have enough products) and thus requires more aggressive marketing techniques (Brewer 2001a).

WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF CAPITALIST SYSTEMS

Aron (1968) noted that the essence of capitalism is "to proceed from money to money by way of commodity and end up with more money than had at the outset". The aim of all forms of capitalism is to "maximise profit" in some way or other.

Hawken et al (1999) summarise the "mind-set" of the "present capitalistic system" (sometimes called "free-market capitalism"):

- Economic progress is best in free-market systems of production and distribution;
- Competitive advantage is gained by larger plants manufacturing more products for expanding markets;
- Growth in output maximises human well-being;
- Resource shortages will lead to development of alternatives;
- Free-market system will allocate resources (including labour) to their best use;
- The requirement of economic growth are more important that other concerns, like the natural environment.

These ideas tend to be the theoretical basis of capitalist systems.

MODERN CAPITALIST SYSTEMS IN PRACTICE

The dominant form of capitalism that actually exists in the West today is different in practice to the theoretical model of free-market capitalism. Table 1 lists some of the theoretical ideas of free-market capitalism and their actual relations.

Free-market capitalism is great in an economics textbook, but very different in reality.

1. "Individual as product".

Air travel is an example of the individual as a package to be moved from A to B. The use of statistics to measure success in health and education makes individuals into numbers or products, and then compares them to a mean or norm.

2. Success of capitalism depends on a world ordered as capitalism wants it.

The need for new markets requires the poor to accept

THEORY OF FREE-MARKET	ACTUAL SITUATION
1. Perfect competition ie all producers are equal and consumers' demands dictate production and price	1. "Competition is so imperfect that exceptional profits are commonly earned by exploiting either one's own oligopolistic power or others' oversights, omissions, and mistakes" (Hawken et al 1999 p264)
2. No monopoly (sole supplier)	2. Many product areas that appear to give choice are owned by same multi-nationals
3. No resource is unemployed or underemployed	3. Estimates vary, but 30% of the world has no work or too little work (Hawken et al 1999)
4. No subsidies or other distortions to free-market exist	4. It is difficult to find a country without subsidies or trade barriers
5. Free-market exists without regulation	5. Regulation is needed to protect individuals from complete exploitation by corporations

(After Hawken et al 1999)

Table 1 - Comparison of theory and reality of free-market capitalism.

their place as a modern day version of the feudal system ordered by God. The imperative to continue economic growth has led to capitalism "fighting" to achieve this aim at the expense of the remainder of the world.

> Developments within the state towards covert repression are not simply expressions of concern to safeguard a threatened democracy, but also, more fundamentally, action taken in defence of the structure of underlying capitalist relations (Schlesinger 1991 p84).

> Motivated by an obsession with unlimited economic growth, the science of technology has been corrupted and shaped into a tool for the rape of the earth. Having confused the difference between an improved standard of living and an improved quality of life, we have unwittingly sacrificed the latter for the former (Ashton and Laura 1998 p1).

While Cooper and Evans note:

> The current economic system is dependent on the continual social construct of consumer desire. In

> saturated markets for consumer durables, producers are reliant on replacement purchases and modifications to existing models to induce sales by expanding perceived necessities. Manufacturers operating in this environment are positioned in an ambiguous state, their role of supplying durable products to meet consumer needs conflicting with that of maintaining high levels of demand in order to continue production.

An "anti-capitalism movement" (Drury 2003) has developed because of the "evils" of capitalism now not being hidden behind ideology as during the "Cold War". During that period, the emphasis being on the totalitarianism and violence of the East, while "the violent origins of most liberal democracies tended (and still continue) to be conveniently forgotten" (Schlesinger 1991).

The increased information has meant that the behaviour of companies is open to scrutiny. The justification of the ideology of the "Cold War" allowed "evils" to exist for the supposed "greater good". But now there is a need for a new enemy (eg: "Terror"). Schlesinger (1991) makes it clear that those with power must protect themselves from the accusation of misuse of power "by invoking the mystique of legality and legitimacy".

But the disenfranchised are driven to extremes because the West is apparently deaf to their cries.

Capitalism systems must have control of both production and consumption. This can be achieved in the future by declaring a war which cannot be opposed.

Negri and Hardt (2003) are interested in the forms of refusal to this control (eg: body piercings by the individual, or migration by the masses). These refusals, for them, can become a "multitude" that challenges capitalism.

The scenario is presented as black and white, them and us: "Western society is so locked into production and consumption systems that replacing these systems implies the destruction of capitalism" (Gupta 2001 p74).

Edwards (1995) points out the "necessary beliefs" for "corporate-run economies" to succeed:

a) "..it is important that the majority of people agree that corporate profit maximisation leading to economic growth is the primary goal of industrial society.." (pp42-43);

b) "..we should believe.. that our functioning as 'cogs' within this process of mass production is the best way of leading a worthwhile fulfilled life" (p43). Thus there is a clear definition of "success", usually through product ownership and consequent status. To quote Marx

(1967):

> "..an object is only ours when we have it, when it exists for us as capital or when it is directly eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited etc.. the sense of having" (p132);

c) "..we should believe that mass consumption is the most sensible, sane and realistic means for finding happiness" (p43);

d) we must believe that we freely chose these goals.

> Our whole system rests upon the fictitious belief that nobody is forced to do what he does, but that he likes to do. This replacement of overt by anonymous authority finds its expression in all areas of life: force is camouflaged by consent; the consent is brought about by methods of mass suggestion (Fromm 1992 p25).

The "necessary beliefs" are enforced by the discouragement of alternatives through the lack of access to alternative viewpoints, and the definition of non-conformity as mental illness (Kovel 1981; Brewer 2001a). The debate is also limited by ridicule of alternatives, outright silence, and the relativity of truth (Edwards 1995).

> Economic growth, status through success, corporate profit-maximisation, increasing wealth and comfort and so on are deemed to be unquestionably good and right; yet parallel to this and considered equally unquestionable (when required), is the notion that all good and right is relative and so essentially meaningless (Edwards 1995 p56).

OTHER ASPECTS OF CAPITALIST SYSTEMS IN THE WEST TODAY

There are a number of other social processes and aspects of capitalist systems in the West that are unique or more important compared to the past in the twenty-first century. Sometimes these are grouped under headings like "post-modernity" or "globalisation" (Brewer 2003).

1. "Disneyization" of society

Bryman (1999) defines this as "the process by which the principles of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (p26).

This process has four aspects:

a) Theming - the dominance of brands or themes for all areas of economic life, usually linked to films, music, or sport. Overall the process creates a series of images that consumers can relate to, even if the themes are myths. For example, "Frontierland" at "Disneyland" is a "cinematic version" of the "Wild West".

b) Dedifferentiation of consumption - this is the situation where different forms of consumption become interlocked together: "a tendency for shopping, eating, hotel accommodation and theme park visiting to become inextricably interwoven" (Bryman 1999 p34). For example, "Main Street USA" at "Disneyland" is an excuse for toy shops and "disguised supermarkets".

In other situations, it is not possible to leave museums, for example, without passing through the "gift shop". For Crawford (1992), "malls routinely entertain, while theme parks function as disguised marketplaces" (p16).

c) Merchandising - here Bryman is referring to the "promotion of goods in the form of or bearing copyright images and logos" (p36).

d) Emotional labour - this, in some ways, is the most disturbing aspect of "Disneyization". Workers are required to control the self through emotional labour: "the act of expressing socially desired emotions during service transactions" (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993 pp88-89).

Ritzer (1993) has noted this process in the "McDonaldization" of society. Initially this idea has ben observed in airline attendants (Hochschild 1983).

"Emotional labour" is not just about the appearance to the customer, but how the workers feel about themselves. The company wants to control even the feelings of the workers.

2. Ideologies

i) Pluralism and conflict

All views are equal and everybody has the right to what they want. But this produces a conflict of views where force is used to resolve it.

ii) Corporationism

The dominance of large multi-nationals, which are mainly American. This produces the perception of US imperialism in the sense that certain iconic products (like Coca-Cola) are marketed and sold forcefully through the world.

iii) Fundamentalism of all types as a means to cope with complexity of modern (or "post-modern") world.

Blum (2001) sees the US as involved in a "jihad to impose capitalist fundamentalism upon the world" (p241). For him, this can be seen in the features of US foreign policy in recent years:

a) to make the world open for "globalisation" and US trans-national companies (TNC);
b) to enhance defence contractors;
c) to prevent the rise of alternatives to capitalism;
d) to "create a world order in America's image" (p14).

While Chomsky and Herman (1979) highlight how US foreign policy has (and continues to) define "the spectrum of acceptable and unacceptable bloodshed". Interestingly, "those who oppose established orders are the terrorists, while state terrorism is a category virtually never employed, unless it refers to the Communist bloc" (when that existed) (Schlesinger 1991 p20).
Chomsky and Herman prefer to call the "state or official violence", "wholesale terror", as opposed to the "retail terror" of the "non-state or unofficial violence".

iv) "Hollywoodism"

The "cultural imperialism" of film and television industry which puts US (or capitalist) values into every home.

Brewer (2001b) included three other important aspects of Euro-American culture: the "commodification" of every aspect of life; the "sexualisation" of all aspects of society; and the distancing between producer and consumer.

ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN MODERN CAPITALIST SYSTEMS

Media as reflector and constructor of behaviour and society to fit the values and norms of capitalist systems.

i) Cruelty and competition in television shows emphasising the "dog-eat-dog" aspects of capitalism.

It is not enough to have quiz shows with competition, but encourage contestants to choose who gets next question to emphasise the "cut-throat" nature of the world.

ii) "Culture of confession"; ie: the right to know everything.

Thus celebrities cannot hide any aspect of their lives. Their purpose, in one sense, is for public entertainment - the more scandal or personal revelations, the better. Also the increase in talkshows which could be classed as "public confessional TV".

But what is confessed is usually a reaffirmation of the system or status quo. Newman and Holzman (2003) argued that therapy, both in the formal sense or through talkshows, does not challenge the "commodification" of experience.
Newman and Holzman argued that:

> As therapists, we must find ways to strip away the commodification that overdetermines not only how we see and feel, but also how we speak and relate, and what we believe to be possible (pp16-17).

They propose "social therapy" whose goal is "to help people to grow emotionally/create a new culture" (p17).
Furthermore:

> ..what is most helpful to people emotionally - in this culture that has socialised us to get as much as we can while giving as little as we can - is not getting more, but giving. What we mean by giving is actively sharing our emotional "possessions" (decommodifying them) (Newman and Holzman 2003 p17).

iii) Manipulation of expectations by advertising, hand in hand with "hype society".

The excess of praise for products leads to "marketing the self" (ie: excessive claims about the self). This leads to the need for everything to be

"fantastic" rather than just "good".

Oliver James (1999) sees that increased consumerism since the 1950s in the UK has not led to increased happiness. The manufacturing of dissatisfaction by raising aspirations. Thus even the apparent "winners" in society are unhappy because of the need to be perfect to be accepted. The comparison is always made upwards with those who have more or are better.

iv) Meaninglessness of the media images.

Gottschalk (2000) sees television as "switching effortlessly between Bosnia's ethnic cleansing and professional ice-skating". For Robbins (1994), "the catastrophic and the banal are rendered homogeneous and consumed with equal commitment". The same amount of effort is put into a feature on animals who can do tricks as into highlighting the injustices of the world.

v) Continued control of "reality" by the media.

Chomsky and Herman (1988) argued that the media's control of "news" is not a conspiracy to hide the "truth", but simply a maintaining of self interest. The goal of "consumer capitalism" to make more profits becomes an accepted framework, and "news" is used to support this.

Chomsky and Herman (1988) highlight five "filters" and restrictions by which the media can control "news":

a) Medias companies are multi-national profit-seeking companies who have a "special stake in the status quo" (Chomsky and Herman 1988);

b) Advertising pays for the production of the media, and so can "dictate" the messages produced in direct ways. For example, programmes that are complex and disturbing which discourage the "buying mood" or contradict the "selling message".

c) Source of "news". Large companies and bureaucracies (including governments) control the "news" given to the media through press releases, and the size of their PR departments. The individual who wants to put forward a dissenting view is restricted.

d) The use of "flak". The use of negative responses to limit the messages in the media. This can vary from individual complaints to the withdrawal of advertising revenue by large companies.

e) Anti-communism. This term is now dated, but the concept of a "terrifying enemy" is still used to justify control and the restriction of dissent.

AN ALTERNATIVE?

Primarily because of the concern about the natural environment, Hawken et al (1999) propose a form of sustainable development called "Natural Capitalism". It is based upon care and the sensible use of natural capital, which is made up of "resources, living systems, and ecosystem services" (p4).

"Natural Capitalism" has four principles:

a) Radical resource productivity - increase the effective use of non-renewable resources.

Womack and Jones (1996) describe the resources involved in the production of a can of cola sold in England: bauxite mined and purified in Australia (one ton of bauxite gives half a ton of aluminium oxide); smelted into aluminium metal in Sweden or Norway (half a ton of aluminium oxide gives a quarter ton of aluminium metal); and cans formed in England. By the time of the consumption of the cola, the aluminium waste is 88% as many cans are not recycled. This does not include the contents of the can.

b) Biomimicry - design industrial systems based on biological lines that reduce waste, and particularly toxicity. For example, spiders make silk from digested flies without the need for toxic chemicals as in industrial production of similar substances (Benyus 1997).

c) Service and flow economy - a change from the focus on selling goods to the idea of services and "flow". The emphasis on services would mean that products are leased, and the manufacturer would be responsible for replacing and repairing it.

Thus products are returned to manufacturers for continuous repair, reuse and remanufacture. "Instead of purchasing a washing machine, consumers would pay a monthly fee to obtain the service of having their clothes cleaned" (Hawken et al 1999 p17).

In such a situation, the product is a means not an end, and there is an incentive for all to help the economy "flow".

d) Investing in natural capital - increasing natural resources.

"Natural Capitalism" is an attempt to make capitalism more sustainable. But it does not necessarily challenge the underlying values and norms of capitalist systems. In fact it can be seen as one of the possible capitalist systems.

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KEVIN BREWER

Article written June 2004

Treating Schizophrenia Today: An Introduction to Clozapine

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally schizophrenia has been treated by anti-psychotic (or neuroleptic) drugs known chemically as phenothiazines. This group of drugs includes the first drug used with schizophrenia in the 1950s, chlorpromazine. More recently, other classes of chemicals been developed to treat schizophrenia -butyrophenones (eg haloperidol), thioxanthenes (eg: flupenthixol), and the "atypical" anti-psychotics. Clozapine is an "atypical" anti-psychotic of the chemical class, dibenzodiazepine (Potter and Hollister 1998).

How to define an "atypical" anti-psychotic drug?

Kapur and Pennington (2001) noted that the definition of an "atypical" anti-psychotic was originally linked to clozapine because there were less extrapyramidal side effects (EPSE) than phenothiazines, and that clozapine was effective for some drug-resistant patients (30-50%; Kane et al 1988) (1), and particularly those with negative symptoms of schizophrenia (2). There was also a lack of prolactin elevation.

The definition of "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs now includes risperidone, olanzapine, quetiapine, and ziprasidone in the USA, and amisulpiride, sertindole, and zotepine elsewhere. Generally activity at D2 dopamine receptors (3) is seen as the only property that unites "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs today (Kapur and Pennington 2001).

IS CLOZAPINE BETTER THAN OTHER ANTI-PSYCHOTIC DRUGS?

1. Efficacy/Effectiveness

The "efficacy" of the drug means the outcomes under ideal conditions, while the "effectiveness" is how well it works under practical conditions in removing the symptoms of the illness, or in stopping relapse of the symptoms (Zito and Provenzano 1995).

Sheitman et al (1998) listed six "good quality" studies (4) of the effectiveness of clozapine: four studies found it to be superior to chlorpromazine for treatment-resistance schizophrenia patients, one study that it was equal to chlorpromazine, and one study that

it was equally effective as haloperidol.

Baldessarini and Frankenburg (1991) reported that 9-13% of patients got better on clozapine compared to traditional anti-psychotic drugs. This was based upon a review of fourteen double-blind studies between 1971-88.

With passing time, more and more individual studies have been conducted, and then they are summarised in reviews. Each study attempts to replicate and support the previous studies. However, with the increasing number of studies, some of them will find contradictory results. This leads to meta-analysis (5), which attempts to statistical re-analyse all the studies to find the overall pattern.

Moncrieff (2003) produced such an analysis of studies comparing clozapine and traditional anti-psychotic drugs for treatment-resistant schizophrenia patients.

She identified nine studies, and calculated the standardised mean differences (SMD) to allow combination of the results. Each study had different durations (6), and different anti-psychotic drugs as comparison with clozapine (7), for example, and these were statistical standardised.

Eight of the studies showed benefits for clozapine over the other drugs in varying degrees (8), and one study favoured the other drug (Essock et al 1996). But four of the eight studies did not find significant benefits.

Importantly, Moncrieff highlighted the differences in studies. In other words, which studies found the strongest support for clozapine: shorter duration studies, higher levels of baseline symptoms of schizophrenia (9), commercial support from pharmaceutical companies, and "probably" historically earlier studies.

Overall, Moncrieff emphasised that it may be inappropriate to combine the results of different studies, particularly when overlooking differences between them.

The efficacy of a drug can also involve other behaviours than just reducing the main symptoms of the illness, for example in reducing suicidal behaviour.

Munro et al (1999)'s study of 12 760 patients found that those treated with clozapine had a four-fold decrease in expected risk of suicide compared to schizophrenia not treated with clozapine.

In the International Suicide Prevention Trial (InterSePT), Meltzer et al (2003) reported a multi-centre randomised open trial (10) in 11 countries (11) to compare clozapine and olanzapine. The 980 participants were all considered at high risk for suicide, and were diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. The main outcome measure was suicidal behaviour in the subsequent two years. Clozapine was more effective than olanzapine

in reducing suicidal behaviour (table 1).

	CLOZAPINE	OLANZAPINE
TOTAL SUICIDE DEATHS	5	3
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE TOTAL	7.7%	13.8%
OVERALL ANNUAL RATE	5.8%	8.7%
HOSPITALISATION TO PREVENT SUICIDE	16.7%	21.8%

Table 1 - Comparison on clozapine and olanzapine on suicidal behaviours from Meltzer et al (2003).

But Volavka (2003) pointed out that many participants in the InterSePT were also given anti-depressant drugs at the same time. Thus the effect on suicidal behaviour is not just from the anti-psychotic drugs.

Within the NHS, "resource utilization" or "value for money" are now important concepts. Duggan et al (2003) calculated that the use of clozapine in the UK with approximately 30 000 treatment-resistant schizophrenia patients would save £8.7m per annum. This is based upon the calculation of 53 less suicides per year, 167 acute hospital beds freed per year, and a cost per life-year saved of £5108.

It should be noted that this study was purely mathematical calculations. It was supported by Novartis Pharmaceuticals (the manufacturers of clozapine). This is not to say that the data are false, but there is concern over the funding of research projects by pharmaceutical companies.

> The influence of the pharmaceutical industry has probably been understated in some studies, since published reports declared only whether the study had received direct funding from a pharmaceutical company. Financial interests of individual authors were not declared (Moncrieff 2003 p165).

2. Side Effects

Lieberman et al (1994; reported in Cunningham Owens 1996) recorded the side effects reported by at least ten per cent of patients taking clozapine. These included anergia (12), drowsiness, hypersalivation (excess saliva and dribbling), dizziness and nausea, constipation, increased appetite, weight gain and loss, blurred vision,

urinary incontinence and frequency, and excitement.

The side effects reported generally by studies include sedation (low compared to other anti-psychotic drugs); anticholinergic (13); risk of seizures; hypotension (low blood pressure)(medium compared to other drugs); agranulocytosis (14) (1-2% of patients; Alvir et al 1993) (12 fatalities among 10 000 patients; Honigfeld et al 1998); myocarditis (15) (Goff 2002). There are also reports of gastro-intestinal obstructions (BMA 2003).

Table 2 shows a comparison of the side effects between clozapine and the other eight "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs (16).

OTHER "ATYPCIAL" ANTI-PSYCHOTICS			
	BETTER THAN	SAME AS	WORSE THAN
extrapyramidal side effects (17)	7	quetiapine	0
prolactin elevation (18)	7	quetiapine	0
weight gain	0	olanzapine	7
lipid increase (19)	0	olanzapine	3*

(* no data for four drugs)

(After Kapur and Pennington 2001)

Table 2 - Comparison of side effects between clozapine and eight other "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs.

Kerwin (1995) noted that between 1990-5, the "Clozaril Patient Monitoring Service" recorded a rate of 0.05% for suicide among 63 000 individuals who took clozapine. The rate of neutropenia (20) was 0.12%, which is similar to phenothiazines.

3. Cost

By US pharmacy prices, clozapine is much more expensive than traditional anti-psychotic drugs ($4.20 per pill vs $0.37 for chlorpromazine). But cheaper than olanzapine ($13.27 per pill) and risperidone ($7.35) (Goff 2002).

In the UK, the annual cost of clozapine is estimated at £2920 compared to £1770 for other anti-psychotic drugs (NICE 2002). Table 3 shows the individual costs of five anti-psychotic drugs.

TYPE OF DRUG	TRADE NAME	COST (£)	QUANTITY
clozapine*	clozaril	12.33	28 tabs
chlorpromazine	largactil	0.71	56 tabs
haloperidol	serenace	1.73	30 tabs
olanzapine*	zyprexa	31.70	28 tabs
risperidone*	risperdal	7.67	20 tabs

(* = "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs)

(Source: BMA 2003)

Table 3 - Comparison of official British prices of five anti-psychotic drugs in September 2002 prices.

CONCLUSIONS

The risk of agranulocytosis is a concern, and clozapine is not available in some countries (Gelder et al 1996). However, it is still used in other countries, with weekly blood monitoring of patients, because of lack of response to other drugs or intolerable extrapyramidal side effects. Gelder et al (1996) emphasised the caution needed with clozapine use.

The high level of side effects with this drug or any drug is accepted by medical practitioners because it is argued to be better than the illness. This may not be agreed by all patients (Brewer 2002a). Cohen (1997) noted a disregard for patients' accounts of their subjective experience because it is assumed that such experiences are unreal due to the psychosis.

Is clozapine better than other anti-psychotic drugs? Moncrieff's (2003) conclusion suggested a negative answer to this question:

> Despite clozapine's reputation, there is substantial heterogeneity among trials comparing clozapine with conventional anti-psychotics for treatment-resistant schizophrenia. Most recent trials have not replicated the dramatic superiority shown by clozapine in early trials (p165).

FOOTNOTES

1. This "landmark" study compared clozapine and chlorpromazine in 268 treatment-resistant schizophrenic patients. "Treatment-resistant" was defined as having previously failed to respond to at least three prior neuroleptics, and to have been without any "good

functioning" within the last five years. The patients also did not respond to a six-week haloperidol trial (Sheitman et al 1998).

More recent studies suggested that clozapine is effective for 60% of treatment-resistant patients (Meltzer et al 1990).

2. Negative symptoms include inactivity, and flatness of emotions, while examples of positive symptoms are hallucinations and delusions.

3. These are particular receptors involved in synapses in the brain, and linked to the neurotransmitter dopamine.

4. Methodologically rigorous controlled clinical trials with placebo (dummy pill) and comparison drug groups as well. The participants are randomly assigned to the groups, and the procedure is double-blind (neither the investigator nor the participant know which group they are members of until the study is finished) (Nathan and Gorman 1998).

5. The usual focus of meta-analysis is to calculate the "effect-size" (known as "d") of many studies in the same area (Wood 1995). "d" = (mean of experimental group) minus (mean of control group), then divided by standard deviation of control group (Glass et al 1981).

6. The length of studies varied from 6 weeks (3 studies) to 2 years (1 study). The median length was 12 weeks.

7. The comparison drugs were chlorpromazine (4 studies), and haloperidol (5 studies).

8. The difference between the groups on the main symptom rating scales as a percentage of the post-treatment score in the control group varied from 3.9% to 44.4% in favour of clozapine.

9. All the studies used the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS), but the baseline varied from 38 to 84. A higher score means more severe symptoms.

10. An open trial is where both investigators and participants know which group they belong to (Brewer 2002b).

11. InterSePT involves 67 centres in 11 countries: Argentina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, South Africa, UK, and USA.

12. Anergia - lethargy.

13. Anticholinergic side effects - dry mouth, blurred

vision, and constipation.

14. Agranulocytosis - change in white blood cells.

15. Myocarditis - inflammation of muscles in the heart wall (myocardium).

16. The eight other drugs were 7 "atypical" anti-psychotic drugs - amisulpride, zotepine, risperidone, olanzapine, quetiapine, sertindole, and ziprasidone - and haliperidol (butyphenone).

17. Extrapyramidal side effects - parkinsonism (including reduced facial expressions, and general muscular rigidity); dystonia (including unco-ordinated movements, and tongue protrusions); akathisia (including inability to sit still, and shifting weight from foot to foot when standing); and tardive dyskinesia (including tics, and grimaces of the mouth) (Brewer 2002a).

18. Prolactin elevation - secretion of prolactin involved in lactation.

19. Lipids eg cholesterol.

20. Neurotropenia - changes in the number of neurotrophils in the blood; less than 500 may be life-threatening (Mosby's 2002).

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Measuring the Amount of Child Sexual Abuse: The Problems

INTRODUCTION

The accurate measurement of criminal behaviour generally is difficult (Brewer 2000). It is even harder to measure the amount of child sexual abuse: both an illegal and a socially unacceptable behaviour that takes place away from public view. This article looks at the different methods used to measure child sexual abuse, and the problems with each method.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

a) Government

The Home Office in the UK maintains an official register of "notifiable offences" as collected from police records. This is a record of the number of crimes that the police receive and act upon.

In the UK, the official statistics do not distinguish between the different types of sexual offences, other than rape. Thus the figures in table 1 are for sexual offences generally against adults and children.

However, Bagley and Pritchard (2000) noted that there were 374 convicted male child abusers in Britain at that time.

	1999-00	2000-01
ENGLAND AND WALES	30 000	28 000
SCOTLAND	3000	3000
NORTHERN IRELAND	1000	1000

(After National Statistics 2002)

Table 1 - The number of sexual offences, excluding rape, as recorded by the Home Office.

The figures collected by the Home Office are not the same as all crimes that occur. There are a number of reasons for this difference, and because not all crimes are reported to the police or the relevant authority (eg Social Services) (Brewer 2000).

1. A crime may not be reported by the victim.

This is clearly the case where children are the victims. They may not know that an offence has been

committed. The child may not be aware of what is "improper behaviour", or is unable to distinguish affection from abuse when family and friends are involved (Crooks and Baur 1990).

The child may not be sure who to tell about the incident. The abuse may take place within the family or extra-familial group (eg: friends of the parent(s) or babysitters). Thus the child may be afraid to report the incident, or feel that they would not be believed. This is probably the major reason that child sexual abuse is not reported to the police.

2. The victim may withdraw the accusation or charge.

When the victim realises what is involved in prosecuting an individual (eg: appearing in court or via a video link), or simply through fear, the child could change their mind about the accusation.

3. The police can make the decision not to include a crime in the official figures because there is lack of evidence, for example.

Child sexual abuse is notoriously difficult to establish legal evidence without witnesses or physical signs.

b) Other Agencies

Official statistics can also include reported cases collected by other official agencies, like, in the USA, the National Centre for Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN).

The "Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect" (NIS-3) (Sedlak and Broadhurst 1996) collected, for Congress, all reported cases of child sexual abuse by caretakers (parents, parent substitutes, adults, and non-parent teenagers). For 1993, there were 300 200 reported cases.

This translates to a prevalence rate of 3.2 per 1000 children. This figure is an increase from 0.7 (NIS-1 in 1980) and 1.9 (NIS-2 1986) (Haugaard 1999).

In England and Wales, a similar study by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) reported 6 600 cases of child sexual abuse in 1989. This gives a rate of 3.25 per 1000 children (Creighton 1990).

While Sidebotham et al (2000) found a prevalence rate of 10.9% in a study of pre-school children in Avon using the Child Protection Register.

The advantage of official statistics are that they provide a readily available source of data which has been professionally identified. Generally, this source of data has strengths and weaknesses (table 2).

Among researchers, it is generally felt that official statistics underreport crime. To what degree, the estimates vary. For example, Russell (1984) claimed that only 2% of incest cases and 6% of extra-familial cases of sexual abuse are reported to the police.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- examine trends over long period	- official definitions used only
- comprehensive source of data	- Government information only ie not all cases reported

Table 2 - Strengths and weaknesses of use of data from official statistics.

Official statistics show an increase in reported cases of child sexual abuse in recent years: from 3000 cases in 1985 in England and Wales (Creighton 1990), for example. But this may be a facet of increased reporting as a result of greater public and professional awareness (Taylor 1992).

VICTIM STUDIES: GENERAL POPULATION SURVEYS

If official reports of a crime cannot be trusted, then it may be possible to get a more accurate picture from the victims. This type of research chooses a sample of the general population to ask. It is felt that the data collected here give a more accurate picture of the amount of a behaviour in the population as a whole. However, it is sometimes not possible to know if the sample is representative of the population as a whole.

Generally, there are three groups of issues faced in the construction and carrying out of surveys and interviews (Brewer 2002).

1. The wording used in the questionnaire.

The way the questions are phrased influences the answers given, and thus the data collected (table 3).

2. The interviewer-interviewee interaction.

ISSUE	DETAILS

- open vs closed questions	closed questions limit information given; open questions produce data difficult to compare and/or code (Belson and Duncan 1962)
- response alternatives	number and type of response choices influence answers given; "satisfied" gets different response to "dissatisfied" (Peterson and Wilson 1992)
- question wording	not ambiguous or complex questions; not emotive or leading questions; not using technical terms; different words have different meanings (Coolican 1994)

Table 3 - Some issues with wording of questions in surveys.

The interview is not a neutral process of collecting data, it is a social interaction with a number of factors to consider (table 4).

ISSUE	DETAILS
- social desirability bias	tendency to give acceptable answer to questions
- evaluation cues	interviewee aware of how responses will be interpreted by interviewer, and looks for signs; eg: facial expressions
- gender/ ethnicity	differences between interviewer and interviewee produce different responses to similarity in gender or ethnicity
- honesty of answers	lie; memory error; misunderstanding of question

(After Coolican 1994)

Table 4 - Some issues in the interviewer-interviewee interaction.

3. The sampling of the respondents.

It is important to have a representative sample, such that the findings can be generalised (table 5).

In one study of the general population in the USA in the early 1990s, it was found that 12% of men and 17% of women reported being "sexually touched by an older person" during childhood (Laumann et al 1994).

Other figures from the USA suggest a prevalence of 13-16% for men and 15-33% for women in the general

population (Hess and Brinson 1999). The figures from surveys of the general population can vary from 6-62% for women and 3-31% for men (Taylor 1992).

This is because of the different definitions of abuse used by researchers: from narrow definitions related to sexual activity to wider definitions including indecent exposure, and seeing pornography (Peters et al 1986).

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION
- random	every member of research population has equal chance of being chosen	no guarantee of represent -ativeness
- opportunity	random sample of those available	limited choice
- volunteer	use of volunteers	how typical are volunteers?
- purposive	eg quota sample from different groups, like age, gender	cross-section of population

Table 5 - Main types of sampling used in surveys.

Wide definitions including exhibitionism and touching found prevalence rates of 30% for men and 60% for women, compared to narrow definitions which focus on repeated penetration. With the latter, the rates are nearer 2% for males and 4% for females (Carr 1999).

Too wider a definition of sexual abuse can be problematic:

> ..the subject who has been "flashed at" once on her way home from school, the subject who has seen pornography and the subject who had been repeatedly raped by someone charged with her care and protection would all be classified under the same category and included in the same percentage figure (Taylor 1992 p24).

This has led to an attempt to distinguish "contact" and "non-contact" abuse (Peters et al 1986).

The rates of abuse will also vary with the method used, for example, interviews compared to self-administered questionnaires.

A telephone survey by the Los Angeles Times of 3000

Californian adults in July 1985 found that 22% of the respondents reported child sexual abuse (27% for women and 16% for men). It also found that 70% of the abuse was committed by a relative or friend of the family, and only 7% of the abusers were female (reported in Crooks and Baur 1990).

Also how the respondent is asked to recall the information (for example, with a list of possible behaviours) can influence the findings (Wyatt and Peters 1986).

The accuracy of any retrospective study is open to question. Williams (1994) was able to interview 129 women who were known to have experienced child sexual abuse. Only 38% mentioned the experiences to a female interviewer. Whether this is a lack of recall of up to 17 years ago, or embarrassment to talk about it, is unclear (Glaser 2002).

Whether the sample is randomly selected or a representative sample is used can be important. In Britain, Baker and Duncan (1986) interviewed 1029 adults in one week in September 1984. They used a representative quota sampling method which attempted to sample respondents in a way that mirrors the social pattern of society. For example, equal numbers of men and women, different age groups, and ethnic groups. A random sample does not take these differences into account.

Baker and Duncan had a clear definition of child sexual abuse: when "another person who is sexually mature, involves the child in an activity which the other person expects to lead to their own sexual arousal. This might involve intercourse, touching, exposure of sexual organs, showing pornographic material or talking about things in an erotic way" (quoted in Taylor 1992 pp26-27).

This was a wide definition of sexual abuse. The researchers found rates of 12% for women and 8% for men using this definition (giving an overall rate of 10%).

But there is no way of verifying the reports of the respondents. The definition of abuse is also a "minefield of ambiguity" (Taylor 1992). Terms like "touching", and phrases like "talking about things in an erotic way" will mean different things to different people.

Table 6 lists the general problems with victim surveys of crime.

1. Respondents could make up offences
2. Respondents could misunderstand the questions and give incorrect information
3. Answers could include incidents not in appropriate time period of survey
4. Respondents could forget an incident

Table 6 - General problems with victim surveys of crime.

VICTIM STUDIES - SPECIFIC POPULATION STUDIES

Trying to obtain a representative sample can be time consuming for some research, and so it is better to focus of specific groups. There is no guarantee of representativeness though.

a) Women

The rates of child sexual abuse vary between men and women. Some studies have just concentrated upon women in the general population. For example, Russell (1984) reported a survey of 930 women in San Francisco, which found a prevalence rate of 38%. Of the abuse, 11% was committed by strangers, 29% by relatives, and the remainder by adults known to the child.

In an anonymous questionnaire survey of 2592 women in East London, 55% reported child sexual or physical abuse (Coid et al 2001).

b) Men

A number of studies have attempted to establish the rate of child sexual abuse among boys. Table 7 lists some of the studies and their findings.

STUDY	RATE PER 100 BOYS	TYPE OF SAMPLE
Bell & Weinberg (1981)	2.5-4.9	random
Finkelhor (1979)	4.1	college students
Finkelhor (1981)	3.2	random
Fritz et al (1981)	4.8	college psychology students
Karcher & Finkelhor (1984)	3.0	random
Kelly et al (1991)	11.0	British university students

Table 7 - Studies showing rates of child sexual abuse among boys.

There is embarrassment and distress relating to admitting to child sexual abuse, but it could be argued that it is worse for boys. Thus the figures could well be

underestimates.

c) Students

A survey of 952 students in the USA reported a prevalence rate of 7.7% for women experiencing incest and 4.8% for men (Sexuality Today 1981).

d) Clinical Population

Many individuals who suffer from mental illness have experienced child sexual abuse (eg: 67% of 132 Dublin women suffering from depression; Cheasty et al 1998), and this clinical population can be used to estimate the rate of abuse.

Figures from the USA, give a prevalence rates of 35-75% for women and 13-23% for men among the clinical population samples (Hess and Brinson 1999).

e) Specific Sample

Kelly (1988) found a rate of 50% for child sexual abuse among a sample of 60 women. Of these women, half were chosen at random, and half were chosen because of their experiences of sexual violence. Ten of the women were chosen for study because of their experiences of incest.

This study used a definition of "sexual violence" as "any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced.. as a threat, invasion or assault, that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact" (p41).

OFFENDER STUDIES

An alternative method of measuring the amount of a crime is to collect data from convicted offenders. The offenders are assured that the information will not be used against them as well as to keep the data anonymous.

This type of study tends to find that offenders commit many crimes that are not detected: an average of five for male sexual offenders generally (Groth et al 1982). There is always the question of whether these types of self-reported surveys are accurate: individuals could exaggerate or not admit to some offences (Brewer 2000).

Abel et al (1987) interviewed 561 non-incarcerated male sex offenders. They reported many more offences than convicted for. The results showed a much greater preference for male victims, and multiple abuse

behaviours. The most common behaviour was exhibitionism.

CONCLUSION

Clearly the estimated rate of child sexual abuse varies between studies. The rate found will depend upon the method used to collect the data, and the sample of respondents when surveys used. There is no doubt that the rate of child sexual abuse, however this is defined, is greater than the official statistics.

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